

farmers to enhance the future for everyone in rural America.

Our work is not done but I know that, although Jack has retired, he will always remain an active and important voice for labor.

I thank Jack Lick for his years of hard work and dedication. I extend my appreciation to his wife, Mary Lou, and their children, Carolyn, Jennifer, and Jeff. We will not forget your kindness and love for your fellow union workers.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CALVIN COLLEGE ON THE DEDICATION OF THE PRINCE CONFERENCE CENTER AND THE DEVOS COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

**HON. VERNON J. EHLERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 16, 2002*

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Calvin College on the dedication of its two newest facilities, the Prince Conference Center and the DeVos Communications Center, the new home for the college's Communications Arts and Sciences and Political Science departments. These facilities will be formally dedicated in ceremonies to be held on Calvin's campus October 25 and 26.

I am thrilled to see the college's new growth and the new opportunities these facilities will afford Calvin's students, faculty, alumni and visitors. I especially want to thank Ren and Elsa Broekhuizen and the entire Prince family as well as Richard and Helen DeVos for their incredible gifts that made these facilities a reality.

The services rendered through these facilities will serve not only those associated with Calvin, but the rest of the Grand Rapids and West Michigan community, which will be able to participate in public events staged in these facilities. Furthermore, the students who are taught in these facilities will disperse throughout the world with the knowledge and skills gained here. These facilities are truly gifts to the entire world.

As a former student and faculty member, a past recipient of Calvin's Distinguished Alumni Award, and a neighbor of this campus, I am proud my congressional colleagues and I played a part in this expansion, as we provided some of the funding for the 380-foot pedestrian overpass known as Calvin's Crossing. This overpass of the East Beltline provides a safe crossing for people traveling from Calvin's main Knollcrest campus to the new East Campus. In that vein, I would like to offer words of remembrance and condolence to the family of Kevin DeRose, a Calvin student who was killed in 1989 while attempting to cross the East Beltline. Part of these ceremonies involves the planting of a tree near Calvin's Crossing in Kevin's memory. My prayerful hope is that never again will we have to plant another tree on this campus for a similar reason.

Calvin College has come a long way since my days as a student in the 1950s and my years as a professor in the 1960s and 1970s. My student time was spent on the "old" Franklin Street campus. As a member of the faculty and as a neighbor, I have watched the college grow on the "new" Knollcrest campus. And

now, with the opening of the DeVos Communications Center and the Prince Conference Center, we are witnessing the beginning of a new chapter in the life of Calvin College.

My congratulations to Calvin College President Gaylen Byker who helped make these facilities a reality. Congratulations to former president William Spoelhof, whose vision brought Calvin College to the Knollcrest campus and to former president Anthony Diekema, who ably guided the campus through twenty years of expansion. Finally, best wishes to the faculty and students who will be able to enjoy the fruits of these generous gifts.

THE STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SCHIP) ALLOTMENT EXTENSION AVAILABILITY ACT

**HON. KEN BENTSEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 16, 2002*

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Allotment Extension Availability Act of 2002, that would preserve funding for this critically important health insurance program. On October 1, 2002, 25 states nationwide forfeited \$1.2 billion in SCHIP funds because the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 included a provision that recaptured funds from those states which do not fully spend their SCHIP allotment in a timely manner. In addition, if we do not act to correct this inequity, states will lose an additional \$1.6 billion next year.

We simply cannot afford to reduce funding for SCHIP at a time when so many children remain uninsured. In essence, we will be hurting those programs which have helped so many children to get the health care services they need. A recent Census Bureau report found that the number of uninsured children is 8.5 million, a level equal to the previous year survey. In Texas, it is estimated that 11.7 percent of children or approximately 600,000 children lack health insurance.

I believe that the SCHIP program has proven to be a valuable program for our nation's children. It was designed to cover those children whose family income is too high for Medicaid but not sufficient to pay for health insurance. As of 2000, an estimated 3.3 million children have been enrolled in SCHIP which is more than the 25 percent we estimated would benefit from this program when it was created. In Texas, it is estimated that at least 508,000 children are enrolled in the SCHIP program with more than 90,000 children enrolled in SCHIP in Harris County in my local area. If we penalize states for not moving fast enough to cover children, it is very likely that they will make changes to reduce the scope of coverage and discourage families from enrolling their children in this program.

In the past, I and others have spearheaded efforts to expand and improve the SCHIP program and ensure that Texas was not shortchanged in the distribution of SCHIP funding because of the late start in establishing the program. In 2000, Congress, with my support, approved the Benefits Improvement and Protection Act (BIPA) of 2002 which included a provision to guarantee Texas extra funds for

SCHIP. This law provided Texas an additional two years to spend \$267 million of their 1998 and 1999 allotments. Without this change, Texas would have lost \$446 million in federal funds.

I am now offering this legislation to correct the inequity that my state and others face for their Fiscal Year 2000 SCHIP allotment. According to Jason Cooke, Director of the Children's Health Insurance Program in Texas, as of October 1, 2002, Texas will lose \$285 million due to this provision included in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Under my bill, the allotments for FY 1998 and 1998 would continue to be split between those states who have used their allotments and those who have not. The current ratio is 60 percent of unspent funds is returned to those states which have not used their allotments while 40 percent of unspent funds are forwarded to those states who have fully spent their allotments. However, my legislation would guarantee that states could keep all of their SCHIP allotments for FY 2000, 2001, and 2002.

Some will argue that the states should have spent their SCHIP allotment within the three year time period provided for in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. In fact, Texas and several other States did take longer to establish their program. At the time, I along with many of my colleagues urged the Texas Legislature and Governor to act quickly to help uninsured children and penalizing the states will have the unintended consequences of penalizing the children. However, I believe that we should remember the underlying goal of the SCHIP program is to expand coverage for uninsured children. In Texas, where many of these uninsured children live, this penalty will be harshly felt by these working families who simply cannot provide health insurance for their children. In my judgment, the goal of the expanding coverage outweighs the need to encourage quick development of such programs.

I would also argue that we cannot afford to lose these funds in a time of shrinking state budgets. I am very concerned that the result of this reallocation will be to reduce health care services for children. With fewer dollars to spend on the SCHIP program, I believe states will make changes to their programs which will reduce the number of SCHIP enrollees and discourage working families from joining this important program. For instance, states may decide to make enrollment more difficult for working families or states may act to restrict enrollment to lower income families. In Texas, where 11.7 percent of the children lack insurance, I believe we cannot afford to put up barriers to coverage.

I also want to highlight that this legislation is similar to legislation included in President Bush's Fiscal Year 2003 budget that would ensure that states can keep their SCHIP allotments. The President's proposal would provide up to three additional years for states to spend their SCHIP funds through Fiscal Year 2006. The Office of Management and Budget has estimated that up to 900,000 children may lose their coverage due to this funding shortfall and would deprive states of \$3 billion over two years.

I urge my colleagues to support this effort to preserve and strengthen the SCHIP program.